Centering Pregnancy Program coming to Saginaw County to improve the health of newborns and infants

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Saginaw, MI – Can infant mortality rates be improved by providing a group model of care? A program called Centering Pregnancy believes it can; this proven, evidence based program leads expecting mothers through a structured process resulting in fewer spontaneous pre-term births and babies with low birth weight.

The Michigan Health Improvement Alliance, Inc. (MiHIA), in partnership with Central Michigan University Medical Education Partners (CMU Partners) are bringing the program to the region, starting efforts in Saginaw County.

“Saginaw County as a whole has a disproportionate rate of preterm delivery and low birth rates, and our infant mortality rate is .93%, compared to .68% state-wide. We also know that African American mothers experience infant mortality at almost three times the rate of Caucasian females,” says Dr. George Kikano, Dean of CMU’s College of Medicine. “We’re determined to make positive changes to these trends.”

The current CMU Partners obstetrics clinic in Saginaw has a large number of ethnically diverse, low-income women who are at a high risk of experiencing these poor outcomes.

“In the group care model of prenatal care, women become actively involved in their own health and their own care. They have the opportunity to spend about 20 hours of face-to-face time with their provider and group throughout the pregnancy, compared with only 2 hours of total time with a provider in a traditional individual care model. This powerful combination of improved knowledge and participation has been associated with improved outcomes in many areas, and a better experience for patients and providers alike,” says Dr. Erica Canales, MD, who practices in Saginaw.

CMU Partners will be evaluating 10 aspects of birth outcomes on a quarterly basis to track and report the impact of the program.

“Infant mortality is a high priority throughout the state, and MiHIA is eager to play a role in addressing this major health barrier,” says MiHIA CEO Beth Roszatycki. “Our goal is to see a long-term strategy to replicate and expand this program to additional counties beyond Saginaw.”

The Centering Pregnancy program planning will begin in August 2016, with the program delivery starting in late fall. The grant project will conclude in July 2018. For more information, please contact MiHIA at admin@mihia.org.